

Safe routes to school make happier, healthier communities

At Safe Routes Nebraska, we're committed to helping build safe routes to school, so kids can walk and bike more . . . getting the exercise they need for happy, healthy lives. Here's how we do it:

- Provide resources and educational materials to help communities become more walker/biker-friendly.
- Educate teachers, students, parents, and communities on safe walking and biking.
- Encourage kids to walk or bike to and from school—after all, it's fun!

Visit **www.SafeRoutesNE.com** to find out more about helping build healthier communities with Safe Routes Nebraska.



Where to start

For more resources to help you build a healthier community, please visit www.SafeRoutesNE.com.



If you have any questions, contact:

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Active kids are happy kids

Help create safe routes for walking and biking to school.





Get with the program...

and help kids walk and bike safely to school

Safe Routes Nebraska is the Nebraska Department of Roads' state-level implementation of the federal Safe Routes to School program. The program was founded to help improve the health and well-being of children in the United States by giving them a safe way to walk and bike to school.

Why it's so important

Over the last few decades, childhood obesity in America has become an epidemic. Children simply aren't getting enough exercise. Very often, children carry these unhealthy habits into adulthood. And the consequences can be serious.

Walking and biking to school each day gives children much-needed activity to help them maintain healthy lifestyles and avoid medical problems associated with inactivity. And that means a healthier community, lower health care costs, and a brighter future for all of us.

Benefits of walking and biking to school

- Kids who walk or bike to school are more alert and ready to learn when they arrive.
- Walking and biking to school gives kids a sense of independence and community.
- More kids walking means fewer cars making drop-offs, and less traffic around schools makes the area safer for everyone.
- Decreased traffic reduces air pollution and gasoline consumption.

What can you do

- Help your kids map out a route to school.
- If you live far away, drop your kids off a reasonable distance from school and let them walk from there.
- Work with neighborhood parents to establish a walking school bus in which children walk in a group supervised by an adult.
- Teach your kids the rules of the road and how to deal with strangers.

Tips for walking safely

- **Walk together.** Most kids can't judge speeds and distances until at least age 10. Younger children should always walk with an adult.
- **Be seen.** It can be hard for drivers to see pedestrians at times. Make sure kids wear bright-colored clothing and, if it is dark or hard to see, carry flashlights or wear reflective gear.
- **Look for traffic.** Teach kids to always look left, right, and left again before crossing the street and to keep looking and listening while crossing.
- **Cross safely.** Kids should always walk, not run, when crossing streets.



Fit guidelines for bike helmets

Kids should never ride without a helmet. And it's important that the helmet fits properly so it is most effective at protecting the head. Make sure your child's helmet fits by following these guidelines.

1. The helmet should sit level on your child's head and low on the forehead (one or two finger-widths above the eyebrows).
2. The buckle should be centered under the chin.
3. Straps should form a "V" shape under and slightly in front of the ears.
4. The chinstrap should fit snugly so that no more than one or two fingers fit under the strap.